

INTERVIEW WITH BELLA FRANCIS
WITH ROGER KAYE, FEBRUARY 26, 1993

This is Roger Kaye with Bella Francis.

MR. KAYE: Bella, tell me, where were you born?

MRS. FRANCIS: I was born in Orland Park, up the Porcupine River.

MR. KAYE: What year?

MRS. FRANCIS: 1928

MR. KAYE: How long did you stay up there?

MRS. FRANCIS: I stayed up there until 1941.

MR. KAYE: Who were your parents Bella?

MRS. FRANCIS: My father was Charlie Francis. And Blanche is my mother's name.

MR. KAYE: And you were adopted?

MRS. FRANCIS: I was adopted by my Dad.

MR. KAYE: Who was that?

MRS. FRANCIS: Charlie Strong.

MR. KAYE: Tell me about Charlie Strong.

MRS. FRANCIS: Charlie Strong married Mom when she was very young. He went up to Orland Park. They had a little trading post there for the people. There was about eighty people there. A lot of people from all over come there because he had a little store there.

MR. KAYE: What kind of people came?

MRS. FRANCIS: Well, Indians, and sometimes Eskimos. And a lot from Old Crow.

MR. KAYE: Where did the Eskimos come from?

MRS. FRANCIS: Well, there used to be a lot of Eskimos from up around Artic Village, up that way.

MR. KAYE: Did you ever talk to them?

MRS. FRANCIS: No. I see them, but I didn't talk to them.

MR. KAYE: They didn't bring kids?

MRS. FRANCIS: No. They didn't bring no kids. They probably did, but I don't know I guess.

MR. KAYE: What was your Dad's trading post like?

MRS. FRANCIS: Oh it just a log house. There was a drum stove over there to burn wood. It was just like other stores, you got a counter in there and shelves. He'd get all his stuff by getting it on a inboard launch and barge nanovik. He would go up the Porcupine River, that's how he'd get his stuff up there.

MR. KAYE: Where did he come from?

MRS. FRANCIS: He came from Sweden.

MR. KAYE: What brought him to Alaska?

MRS. FRANCIS: He told me that he just ran away from his family when he was fourteen year old. Because of the hard times, and there were a lot of them, and he wanted to go to Alaska. So he made it up to Alaska around the time when he was twenty-five year old he said.

MR. KAYE: Was he a good father?

MRS. FRANCIS: Oh yeah! He was a really good father. He really brought me up good.

MR. KAYE: Tell me about your mother, where was she from?

MRS. FRANCIS: My mother is from Fort Yukon. They were pretty young too, all of them, my aunts and uncles they were pretty young when my grandpa, Dick Martin drowned. So, my grandma had quite a bit of kids to raise up by herself.

MR. KAYE: Did you go to any school up at Old Rampart?

MRS. FRANCIS: We had no school in Old Rampart. There was a school in Fort Yukon, but my Dad doesn't want me, and my sisters to go to school. Even though we wanted to. He doesn't trust anybody, that's why he doesn't want us to go to school in Fort Yukon.

MR. KAYE: Why didn't he trust people there?

MRS. FRANCIS: Well, thinks we were going to get hurt, and things like that I guess.

MR. KAYE: Did you want to go to Fort Yukon? Was it lonely being way out, way up the Porcupine, away from the village?

MRS. FRANCIS: Oh no. Oh no. When we were in Fort Yukon, two month out of the year, we were in a hurry to go back. The reason we were in a hurry to go back was because we were in a hurry to pick berries, and go fishing and things like that.

MR. KAYE: So, about two months out of the year you spent at Fort Yukon then.

MRS. FRANCIS: Yes, from the first of June to the first of September.

MR. KAYE: Was that to bring furs in and send them out?

MRS. FRANCIS: Yes. He would bring all his furs, and he'd wait for his groceries what he sent for. All of that got to be taken care of. While we were there in Fort Yukon for two months people would help him, and he'd take all of the stuff up for the store and for us. He works year round.

MR. KAYE: Tell me about the boat trip from Old Rampart up to Fort Yukon.

MRS. FRANCIS: That was fun. When the first of June would come we'd like it. Up there, there were certain kinds of birds that we don't have up that way, and we see all that. And we see a lot of people up the Porcupine River at that time. We see villages, and when we get close to Fort Yukon, we see tents. You know people go out camping in the springtime for muskrats and ducks, and fishing and everything like that. We really enjoyed ourselves. And they got in nice in the barge that we won't be crowded.

MR. KAYE: Tell me about your fathers barge. How big was it? And did he make it himself?

MRS. FRANCIS: No, there's a guy named Andy Johnson at Fort Yukon that made it.

SIMON: It was Stanley too.

MRS. FRANCIS: Stanley Luke too.

MR. KAYE: How big was it?

MRS. FRANCIS: Oh I don't know. How big is it?

MR. KAYE: A wooden barge?

SIMON: Thirty feet, maybe forty.

MR. KAYE: A plank boat?

MRS. FRANCIS: It was a barge.

SIMON: The barge was about forty feet.

MRS. FRANCIS: Yeah, about forty feet.

MR. KAYE: How many people would ride this barge down to Fort Yukon?

MRS. FRANCIS: Lots. A lot of people. We'd pick people up on the way.

SIMON: That barge could hold about twelve tons.

MRS. FRANCES: We would pick them up on the way, that want to go in. Or help them out because their boat is small. Sometimes they had this small boat. They don't all have big boats. So we helped them. You know, you have to take your dogs and all that with you because there was nobody in the came who will take care of them. You can't go without dogs because don't have no "snow goes" and things like that in those days.

MR. KAYE: So how many people in your family rode the barge to Fort Yukon?

MRS. FRANCIS: My family? All of us.

MR. KAYE: How many, who was that?

MRS. FRANCIS: Oh well, me, and my sisters, and we got one brother. My sister next to me is Doris, and there's Jean, and Barbara and Bessie and Dick Strong.

MR. KAYE: And how long would it take to get to Fort Yukon?

MRS. FRANCIS: It'd take about a day and a half.

MR. KAYE: A day and a half. Did he have a motor on the boat? An inboard?

MRS. FRANCIS: Yeah, an inboard.

MR. KAYE: And he had all of the furs that he had traded?

MRS. FRANCIS: Yes.

MR. KAYE: And how many dogs?

MRS. FRANCIS: Oh, a lot of dogs sometimes. I will say maybe over ten.

MR. KAYE: Oh really?

MRS. FRANCIS: Yes.

MR. KAYE: It must have been really crowded.

MRS. FRANCES: No, it's not crowded.

SIMON: Sometimes there were five families on the barge, dogs and all.

MR. KAYE: Oh really? So, as a little girl when you were living at Old Rampart, what did you do? How did you spend your days?

MRS. FRANCIS: Oh gee, the days would just go so fast. Normally we would get up and Dad would talk to us about what we're supposed to do. Help our mother around the house. When I was young I didn't work outdoor too much. And when I got older I would work out. When we got big enough, maybe around eight or nine year old we always helped her out with cooking, and sweeping the floors, and things like that. There was always a lot of things to do. Making beds too. After lunch, then we all get dressed in all of our furs, and go down to the river and then we'd make our house. All the kids get on down there. It's always so windy. The snow would get so hard you can just saw it out. Saw, it out and get it in a square. And we'd all make a house for ourselves. Just like we helped our mother, we'd do the same thing at our house. We would get our wooden knives and carve things.

MR. KAYE: This was a kid's house?

MRS. FRANCIS: Yeah. Then if we'd get tired of that, we'd get together and we'd slide down, all the village kids. We'd go way up on the hill and pack the big toboggan up and we'd all pile in it and slide down. Or we'd play football.

MR. KAYE: Oh really?

MRS. FRANCIS: Oh, sometimes we'd do that until moonlight. Then they'd have to tell us to come in the house now. Next day, we'd do that again. We had all kinds of games.

MR. KAYE: Tell me about the playhouses that you made as a kid at Old Rampart.

MRS. FRANCIS: Well, the snowdrift would get so hard we'd cut it out. Sometimes we would saw, or axe and cut it in squares, and pile it up and make a house out of it. Big enough for two maybe three to sit in it. Some kids make it big, they got a lot of room in there. After we do that, we'd play in there. We'd carve. Maybe we'd carve doughnuts, and little biscuits, and plates and pots, and all that. We'd make a stove, and pretend we were cooking. And there were chairs and tables. We'd make it real nice. Then we pretended to visit each other, and send a biscuit over to the next snow house. Things like that. That's what we'd do.

MR. KAYE: And you had just your brother and sisters to play with at Old Rampart?

MRS. FRANCIS: No. Other village kids too.

MR. KAYE: At Old Rampart?

MRS. FRANCIS: Yeah, at Old Rampart.

MR. KAYE: And these were children of Indians?

MRS. FRANCIS: Yes, all Indian kids. Then you'd get little snacks. Mother would give us little snacks. Me, I was always getting crackers from the store. Or some kids get dried, smoked meat. We pass around and share with each other. And we'd chew that. And we really enjoyed ourself that way.

MR. KAYE: Did you have more store bought things 'cause your father owned the store?

MRS. FRANCIS: We had more than other kids.

MR. KAYE: More than other kids?

MRS. FRANCIS: Yeah. Because we got it right there you know.

MR. KAYE: Besides you family, your brother and sisters, how many kids lived up at Old Rampart then?

MRS. FRANCIS: Well, I don't know, I can't remember, but just one family was my husband's family. When I remember it, I'd say there were about maybe ten boys, ten or eleven there at one house. Then another family had maybe eight or seven. That was Cyrus Blakely. Then another family that's Henry Wilham, he had about seven or eight.

So we'll say that there's more kids there than adults. There's about maybe fifty, sixty kids. There were a lot of childrens. They did make a log schoolhouse, but they couldn't get teacher. They had a hard time. They tried to get a teacher. In those days you know, they had a Chief and Council. Our Chief really tried, but he couldn't get anybody to teach. That's why we couldn't go to school.

MR. KAYE: Did you plays with dolls when you were a girl?

MRS. FRANCIS: Well, we didn't have very much toys.

MR. KAYE: You didn't?

MRS. FRANCIS: Unless our relatives sent us some. I had a china doll but I dropped it and that was it. We never had Christmas tree. Didn't have no Christmas tree. And at Christmas time we had a potlatch we called it. Everybody would get together and eat together. Then they'd pass out presents. We didn't have no toys so they'd give us, sometimes they'd sew things. They would give us, some people would get fur coats, new ones, and moccasins, mitts, or a scarf. We'd get a lot of goodies though. Hard candy come in big buckets in those days. And cookies. Cookies come in fifty or maybe sixty pound box, they come in. All different kind of cookies, real good ones. And all the dried fruits, they all come in boxes. Raisins come in boxes. Crackers come in boxes. Everything is boxed. The elderly would get leaf tobacco it come in a box. So, at Christmas they would have potlatch all the way to New Years. And they have good time. And they have a dance. They played just like now, a fiddle. They'd have a dance, and teach the kids how to dance.

MR. KAYE: Really? Where was the dance held?

MRS. FRANCES: They had a dance hall.

MR. KAYE: Really? There in Old Rampart?

MRS. FRANCIS: Yeah. They had a dance hall.

MR. KAYE: How many buildings where there, about, in Old Rampart?

MRS. FRANCIS: Gosh, I don't know. There was a lot of buildings, but they all went down.

MR. KAYE: How many would you say, Simon?

SIMON: There was about twelve.

MRS. FRANCIS: But there was more houses that went down. A lot of people stay in tents in those days. There was a log around the bottom and they staid in tents. Even in a blow. Even in Fort Yukon they used to do that. They all staid in tents, down in the village. Nowadays, they don't do that. You know why they don't do that? Because there's danger nowadays.

MR. KAYE: Oh really?

MRS. FRANCIS: Those days, I remember when we live in the village, everything is outdoors. Like in front of the door, when they'd come back from hunting, they'd just put their gun against the wall there. They'd put their gun there, their axe there, their snowshoes there, till next time they go out again.

MR. KAYE: What did you do for mosquitoes?

MRS. FRANCIS: We had smudge. Up there's a lot of bluffs, you know. There's a certain kind of weeds that grow, like grass just like. They pick that up, and they make a fire. And they put that on it. That's what kill mosquitoes. It smelled strong. Like buhack. The mosquito medicine smelled strong. That what they use.

MR. KAYE: Looking back, what was the biggest hardship of living up there?

MRS. FRANCIS: I don't know. But sometime it really hard for people. "Cause its kind of way up, and it's in a canyon you know. Sometime it's hard to get food. I mean like meat and things like that. Or furs.

MR. KAYE: Did you consider life a hardship being so far from town when you were a girl?

MRS. FRANCIS: That's true, that's true. It's hard to go to town you know. You have to go all the way with dogs. And sometime the weather is bad.

MR. KAYE: Did you make the trip with dogs from Old Rampart?

MRS. FRANCIS: Oh yeah, a lot of people come from Fort Yukon.

MR. KAYE: What about you? Did you make that trip?

MRS. FRANCIS: No, not me.

MR. KAYE: What did your father do besides trade there? Did he trap at all?

MRS. FRANCIS: He trapped.

MR. KAYE: He trapped which way from Old Rampart?

MRS. FRANCIS: Saminkut, he traps up that way. He traps over to Old Crow, up that way.

MR. KAYE: Did you ever go with him?

MRS. FRANCIS: No, at that time, I never go with him.

MR. KAYE: You were still very young then?

MRS. FRANCIS: Yeah, very young then. Then when we moved thirty-five mile below where they call Burnt Paw, when we moved there I was sixteen year old. So then he was getting ill.

MR. KAYE: Oh, I see.

MRS. FRANCIS: He was getting short of breath. I can't go out very much. So when he went out with us, he taught me and my sister how to set trap and all that stuff. What do to, and all that stuff. We kind of know little bit from before, we see a lot of people do that in the village. So we start out. And sixteen, seventeen, eighteen and nineteen I trap. I trap all the way around up the Colling River, over the mountain, all over around there I trap.

MR. KAYE: Before you tell me about living at Burnt Paw, as far as Old Rampart goes, didn't they expand when you were there, and start building houses across the river?

MRS. FRANCIS: Oh yeah. Oh yeah. Like some of those houses are very old. There was about four families. They built across the river, where there was nice timber there. They make a whole bunch of nice houses there and they move across. All of them got big family too. And we still stay on this side. A few families stay on this side. Every time we want to visit we get a little boat and go across the river to visit. We can wait til it freeze up too. After it freeze up, then we harness up two dogs and we go over.

MR. KAYE: Oh really?

MRS. FRANCIS: We visit like that, even at nighttime. Lot of time, we holler, and we holler, and tell kids to come over. So they'd do that.

MR. KAYE: Was it dangerous, the Porcupine River? Did anyone drown when you were there?

MRS. FRANCIS: No, nobody drowned when I was there.

MR. KAYE: So, what year was it when you left Old Rampart?

MRS. FRANCIS: 1941.

MR. KAYE: In 1941. And you moved on to Burnt Paw?

MRS. FRANCIS: Um hum. (agreeing)

MR. KAYE: Why did your father move there?

MRS. FRANCIS: Because he was ill. And it's really hard for us up there you know, because it's canyon, all over. Hard for us. Where we moved to is my uncle's place, uncle Richard Martin's place. He went to the Army, so he want us to move down there. It more easy.

MR. KAYE: To Burnt Paw?

MRS. FRANCIS: Yes, it's easier than Old Rampart. That's why we move.

MR. KAYE: Did you build the cabin that's there now? At Burnt Paw?

MRS. FRANCIS: Yeah, in 1944 I build it.

MR. KAYE: In 1944. There was a cabin there before?

MRS. FRANCIS: It burned down.

MR. KAYE: It burned down. Where did Burnt Paw get its name from?

MRS. FRANCIS: I guess that long ago when people travel a lot, you know, always traveling out for food, and for things like that, I guess this one kit, this is what they told me, that one kit fell on the fire or hot ashes or something and burned the foot.

MR. KAYE: Oh, I see.

MRS. FRANCIS: So, in our language they say "burned foot". So they just made it Burnt Paw.

MR. KAYE: So you were about sixteen when you moved to Burnt Paw.

MRS. FRANCIS: Yes.

MR. KAYE: It that about when you started your own trap lines?

MRS. FRANCIS: Yes.

MR. KAYE: Tell me about your trapping. I remember we mapped it, and it was a tremendous length. Tell me about what you did, and how you went about it.

MRS. FRANCIS: Your mean how I start out?

MR. KAYE: Yes

MRS. FRANCIS: Oh well, before we start out, like we said, on September first we go back up to village. The first thing we do, is we fish. Put nets in. I put maybe four or five nets in and try to get fish for the dogs.

MR. KAYE: How many dogs did your family have at this time?

MRS. FRANCIS: I always had nine, nine dogs. The rest of my sisters have dogs too. We get all the dog feed we can.

MR. KAYE: How many salmon would that be, do you think?

MRS. FRANCIS: For a year?

MR. KAYE: Yes.

MRS. FRANCIS: Oh gee, I don't know. I can't guess. But we get a lot of corn meal and tallows and all that too besides the fish. Probably, maybe eight hundred, a thousand maybe. We'd get all kinds of fish. Like whitefish. We put fishnet under ice. For eating and for dogs. My mom fished lots too. Sometimes fish 'til Christmas. Depends on how the ice is too, how thick it gets. If it get too thick, then you have to pull your net out. Then while you're doing that, you get your wood. We go back, and we get wood. Maybe three weeks we cut wood. Cut it all up, haul it. When snow come we haul it in. Then we cut it all up, and then we split it all up. We got to make kitchen wood, we call it kindling for cooking stove. We don't have no propane stove. So, then outdoors we put big tarp over it. That's for winter. We'd get meat, and caribou and moose. Then we'd get everything ready. Then, when snow come, when season opened, we fix our toboggan. Fix all the harness, and all our gears. Mom fixed all our clothes. Then we'd just start off.

MR. KAYE: When you started trapping did you go alone, or did you go with someone?

MRS. FRANCIS: Lot of time my sister went with me.

MR. KAYE: Which one?

MRS. FRANCIS: Doris, she was next to me. She was fourteen year old when she started. I was sixteen. But, I lost her after about a year. A lot of time I had to go alone.

MR. KAYE: Did you think it unusual for a young girl to have a long trap line ?

MRS. FRANCIS: I think it's fun. When I see those women go in the races, in the dog races, I know how they feel. Because I really enjoyed myself when I was out alone. Out alone, and my dogs. Have a good time with the dogs.

MR. KAYE: Were you ever afraid to go out?

MRS. FRANCIS: Never! Never afraid to go out, never. Because in Colling River, there's always a lot of bears. Even my dogs try to pull me in the brush because the first bear tracks go in the brush you know. I just hold them down. One thing, I was not afraid.

MR. KAYE: When you trapped alone, how many nights would you be out on the trap line?

MRS. FRANCIS: I didn't stay long. The longest I stay out is maybe three nights, or two nights.

MR. KAYE: I remember when we traced it on a map it was about ninety miles once. You must have gone a long ways.

MRS. FRANCIS: I do go a long ways when I'm alone. That's the funnest part. When you are alone you can go a long ways. When somebody's with you, gee, you waste a lot of time. I can go up the Colling River to the cabin just like that, you know. But if my sister, or mother go with me, gee it'd take all day!

MR. KAYE: Did you stay in tent camps sometimes?

MRS. FRANCIS: Sometime tent camp, sometime little houses. We build one at let's see, we build one at Colling River, at Fishkil we build one. That's one, two, three, four, below our place, six mile, there's a house too. So we had about five trapping houses. We had about two tents.

MR. KAYE: Two tent camps? And how many dogs were you running now?

MRS. FRANCIS: At that time? Nine. I always run nine.

MR. KAYE: You had pretty good fur catches?

MRS. FRANCIS: Oh yeah! Gee. . .

MR. KAYE: What would you catch?

MRS. FRANCIS: Well, one time was pretty good for link, I remember. It was pretty good for link. And I caught forty-two lynx. And a lot of other animals like fox . . .

MR. KAYE: Was that in one year?

MRS. FRANCIS: One year.

MR. KAYE: And martins?

MRS. FRANCIS: Martins, and the fox, and coyotes.

MR. KAYE: Oh yeah?

MRS. FRANCIS: We had about two or three coyotes one year. And wolverine, things like that.

MR. KAYE: Did you skin them yourself?

MRS. FRANCIS: No. That's one thing, I don't skin them.

MR. KAYE: Who does?

MRS. FRANCIS: I bring them home. My mom does.

MR. KAYE: Oh really?

MRS. FRANCIS: I only thing I don't like is when we haul it. We have a tough time when we haul the lynx.

MR. KAYE: Oh, the furs?

MRS. FRANCIS: Yeah, when they're frozen.

MR. KAYE: Are you using traps, or snares?

MRS. FRANCIS: Everything. Trap and snares. When we trap lynx, we make a house, and put trap, and then we put snare all around it. Because sometimes whole family come. And we get it all at once.

MR. KAYE: Did you ever have any bad things happen to you on the trap line? Break through the ice, or things like that? Get wet, or loose your dog team, or anything?

MRS. FRANCIS: I never loose my dog team. But one time I cut my hand pretty bad.

MR. KAYE: What happened?

MRS. FRANCIS: Well, I was cutting, what did I cut? I was cutting up something in the little house, and the dog made noise so I was going to go out. And some way that knife slipped in my hand. And I cut my hand pretty bad. We have things for it. I put something on it, then I went out and got some spruce pitch and I put that on it, and I wrapped it up. And then I went home.

MR. KAYE: Spruce pitch?

MRS. FRANCIS: Yeah, that's our medicine. I still use it today, yet.

MR. KAYE: Oh, is that right?

MRS. FRANCIS: Yeah.

MR. KAYE: That's neat. Were you hunting at this time too? At this age?

MRS. FRANCIS: Um-hum. (agreeing)

MR. KAYE: What kind of gun did have? And, what did you hunt?

MRS. FRANCIS: I have a lot of guns. I two "seventy". I have two "30.30", and I had, I even forgot the name of those old guns in those days. "25.20" That's my favorite gun.

MR. KAYE: A 25.20?

MRS. FRANCIS: That's my favorite gun because it's short and it's strong. You can kill birds with it, and you can kill caribou with. Or you can kill wolf with it or beaver with it. It's very handy. I always looked for that kind. But I never find no nother one again.

MR. KAYE: That was a Winchester?

MRS. FRANCES: Uh huh. Gee, it was a good one. Then I had shotguns, "22s", all kinds of guns I had. I was not short of anything because we had a lot of things.

MR. KAYE: So, you trapped when you were single, out of Burnt Paw. Tell me about meeting Simon, your husband.

MRS. FRANCIS: There's no "meat" there! Ha-Ha-Ha! Well, he move away from Old Rampart before us. He moved down, eighteen mile below Burnt Paw.

MR. KAYE: To Old Village?

MRS. FRANCIS: Old Village.

MR. KAYE: So you knew him as a child from Old Rampart?

MRS. FRANCIS: Oh yeah. He was a next-door neighbor!

MR. KAYE: Oh he was?

MRS. FRANCIS: I knew him way well when he was in Rampart. When we grow up, we kind of drift apart, you know? Then we took back to each other again! (laughing)
Anyway, he moved down there, and his brother, David Francis, had place there. John Herbert Village, they call it. And he wanted them to move down, 'cause his parents was getting pretty old. He was adopted too. With a couple old parents to raise him up too. I think he left in 1937. He left before us.

MR. KAYE: He went to John Herbert's village?

MRS. FRANCIS: Um hum.

MR. KAYE: So, how did you guys get together then?

MRS. FRANCIS: And then, when we were trapping sometime, he would come up. He don't stay long, maybe a hour or two. Then he'd take off.

SIMON: I would bring the mail out.

MRS. FRANCIS: Sometime he bring our mail out to us. But sometime he come with boat. Sometime he go past, hunting. Anyway, when I was nineteen year old, we went back down to Fort Yukon like we always do, and we stayed there. We had a good time down Fort Yukon. We see all our relatives, you know. And one day, my Dad told me he wanted to talk to me. So I sat down with him. And he told me, he kind of a little bit don't know what to say, but he brought some things back from when I was a child, you know. He say he's not well, and we gonna stay in Fort Yukon now. My Mom and the rest of my brothers and sisters, they were pretty small yet. And he said that I need some help with making a living, and it's time for me to get married now. And he explained a little bit about that too, to me. Right away, he know I don't like it. I told him "I don't need no help, now I'm really going good." But he really want me to get married, and what really got me is, I kind of think about, I thought to myself, "you know, he really brought me up good, really raised me up good, and I can't say no." In those days, we don't say that. We never talk back to our parents. We never say "no". Even if you kind of don't

like it, you can't say that. Because we really believe in them. Anyway, I waited two, three days I guess, and then he told me, "I want you to get married to him".

MR. KAYE: To him? (referring to Simon)

MRS. FRANCIS: To Simon Francis. So that's how we got married. We got married in 1947. The forth of July, we got married.

MR. KAYE: In Fort Yukon?

MRS. FRANCIS: In Fort Yukon. I think we stay up there one more year. And then we went back to Old Village. Keep on moving down.

MR. KAYE: So you went to his camp?

MRS. FRANCIS: To his camp.

MR. KAYE: In 1947?

MRS. FRANCIS: Yeah, so I stayed there eleven years. And there is where I had my three kids. And when I had my first, I was really enjoying myself, going out, but when I had my first baby I really, well, I like baby but it stopped me from going out 'cause I have to take care of it. I have to take care of the house. It was quite a change, 'cause I was outdoors, and all of a sudden I just have to learn these things about family. Raising and working with family. And I start learning how to sew, and how to cook and all those things. But anyway, it didn't take me very long to learn how to cook. I learn fast, I guess. Because it ended with me cooking. I cook in a school thirteen year in Gulgeezik, a year and a half in Fort Yukon. Then I hurt my leg.

MR. KAYE: So this period from 1947 to 1957, you lived at Old Village on the Porcupine, and Simon did the trapping? Tell me about your seasonal cycle. Did every summer or spring, you went down to Fort Yukon again?

MRS. FRANCIS: Same thing again. He had a smaller boat though. What to they call that boat? What do they call your boat?

SIMON: Outboard?

MRS. FRANCIS: He had a different machine. Oh yeah, a little "nine". Oh yeah, it had a little nine Johnson on it.

MR. KAYE: Nine horse?

MRS. FRANCIS: Nine horse power Johnson on it. And it's a narrow boat.

SIMON: About thirty feet.

MR. KAYE: So, when did you start floating down to Fort Yukon.

MRS. FRANCIS and SIMON: Right after “breakup”. Then we stop about six mile, he hunt muskrats. He hunt with canoe, he go out on the lakes and hunt that. Got good price those days. Then we’d move a little farther down, we’d make came and he hunt some more there. Finally we’d get to a place named Human House. Then he’d go out with those people and hunt some more. Meantime, we fished too. We’d dry and smoke fish and everything. We going to use that in Fort Yukon.

MR. KAYE: Now what’s this boat loaded with?

MRS. FRANCIS: With our things, and our dogs, and our kids, and my mother-in-law was living in those day, there was her.

MR. KAYE: What was her name?

MRS. FRANCIS: Bella. Her name is Bella too. And when we land, sometimes we get tired in the boat, and it’s late, kids crying and dog hollering and everything going on. But in those days we were young so it doesn’t matter to us. We just put up the tent quick, and fix the baby’s furs, and tie up the dogs. A lot of time I had to do all that by myself, because my husband had to go out. He want to go out hunting right away. So I put up tent and fix it up.

MR. KAYE: Which kids were with you on this trip?

MRS. FRANCIS: Josie, and Linda, and Charles. I had three.

MR. KAYE: Did Simon have quite a bit of fur in the boat? Was he a good trapper?

MRS. FRANCIS: Oh yeah. He trap since he was sixteen too. He had a big catch. He hunt muskrats. One hundred a night, I guess. You had to skin all that, stretch all that, and dry the meat. That’s why we had to stay sometimes a week at the camp.

MR. KAYE: Did you help him skin?

MRS. FRANCIS: Oh yeah. We used to get a lot of them, a lot of muskrats.

MR. KAYE: What did you do in Fort Yukon, when you got there for the summer?

MRS. FRANCIS: We got there, and joined the people, our relatives. Dance every night. Go shopping, just like we do now, I guess. Dancing, and go visit, and take our kids to clinic. They had a hospital there at the time. He looked for job, and he worked. He worked at a lot of places. He cut wood for winter for a lot of people.

MR. KAYE: So you did this until 1957, what happened then?

MRS. FRANCIS: In 1957, that's when Josie went to school, the oldest one. First school in Fort Yukon. Then, we stay 'til 1968, 1969. . .

MR. KAYE: What happened after 1957?

MRS. FRANCIS: We stay in Fort Yukon, because our daughter is going to school. We stayed there 'til 1962.

MR. KAYE: So, up until 1957 you had gone back and forth, this seasonal cycle, from camp to Fort Yukon and back. Were you the last family in the Porcupine area to quit doing that?

MRS. FRANCIS: I'm pretty sure, yeah. Last family, I think. Yeah, because we go up. That's right. I know because, well. . . My uncle Richard went up a couple of times, but we were the last ones.

MR. KAYE: So, you were in Fort Yukon until 1962. Why did you leave Fort Yukon?

MRS. FRANCIS: We left Fort Yukon because, my uncle Richard Martin is the one that decide, and my cousin Richard Carroll, they decide to go up to Canyon Village. They want us to go along and there was four families. All our kids were small, and everybody is getting into alcohol too much. So we decided to start a new village in Canyon Village.

MR. KAYE: Would this be a "dry" village?

MRS. FRANCIS: Yes. So we left Fort Yukon in 1962. We got up to Canyon Village on September thirteenth.

MR. KAYE: You went by boat?

MRS. FRANCIS: We went by boat.

MR. KAYE: All these families?

MRS. FRANCIS: All thirty-four of us, in one boat.

MR. KAYE: Whose boat.

SIMON: Dicky's

MRS. FRANCES: Dicky's I think. Anyway, when we got to Canyon Village, it's just like landing across the river, you know the way it looks, with gravel and timber. That's the way it looks, just one, old cabin there. By October 22, I move into the house with my husband Simon. We didn't even put the door on the house yet when we move in, because the snow was about a foot deep. We stayed there 'til 1967. We had to move out because he got a job in Gulgeezik. They were making a schoolhouse at the time, so he got a job there. That's why we moved away.

MR. KAYE: And all the families left Canyon Village?

MRS. FRANCIS: Yes, and they all went on. I think Uncle Richard was the last one that stayed there. It's really good there. But it's really hard to get transportation and get some stuff up there.

MR. KAYE: Was there a school there for your kids?

MRS. FRANCIS: Yes, they built a schoolhouse.

MR. KAYE: So then you moved to Gulgeezik?

MRS. FRANCIS: We moved to Gulgeezik, and we stayed there seventeen year.

MR. KAYE: During this time, Simon would go back to Old Village?

MRS. FRANCIS: To Old Village, and trap, every year. Then I got a job in a schoolhouse. Then in 1982, I moved back to Fort Yukon. Now I'm in Fairbanks.

MR. KAYE: Were there ever floaters, recreationists, coming down the Porcupine?

MRS. FRANCIS: Oh yeah. There was a lot of floaters.

MR. KAYE: What about in the early years at Canyon Village? When did the floaters first show up? When did the floaters first show up? When was the first one you saw?

SIMON: Not too much.

MRS. FRANCIS: The first one I saw that I remember was a lady named Kay Gus. I just. Anyway, I just got through smoking a moose hide after I had tanned it. You know, how

we brown it? I put it out there in the light. And I heard this stranger, down on the bank say, “Hi” to the kids. And here was this lady, came. Her name was Kay Gus.

MR. KAYE: Really? How old were you then?

MRS. FRANCIS: Oh gee, I don’t know. Maybe thirty-seven I guess. Anyway, she was my friend ‘til she died.

MR. KAYE: Really? What was she floating in?

MRS. FRANCIS: A little canoe. A “peterbar” they call it?

MR. KAYE: A Peterborough. And she was alone?

MRS. FRANCIS: She was alone.

MR. KAYE: Just floating down the river?

MRS. FRANCIS: Just floating down the river. I told her, “Where are you going”? And she said clear down to Galena, she said.

MR. KAYE: Really?

MRS. FRANCIS: She did that every year for long time. All over the river she did that.

MR. KAYE: What was her name again?

MRS. FRANCIS: Kay Gus.

MR. KAYE: So, you got to know her?

MRS. FRANCIS: I got to know her. And she really helped me lots. All those years she really helped me out with the kid’s clothes and stuff. Then she’d package to the villages.

MR. KAYE: Did she stay with you for a while when she first met you?

MRS. FRANCIS: Yeah.

MR. KAYE: For how long?

MRS. FRANCIS: Oh just a day. She’s in a hurry because she want to go. But I know her lots though. Because when I come to town I stay with her. She had a little house over on Badger Road.

MR. KAYE: Did you think it was odd for someone to just float down the river back then?

MRS. FRANCIS: No, I don't think so. Because it's nice to be out on the river. I think she was enjoying herself. I see a lot of drifter go by but they don't stop sometimes.

MR. KAYE: Back in the 1970s it was proposed that the Porcupine area become a wildlife refuge. It became Artic Refuge. What did you think about the idea of making it a wildlife refuge?

MRS. FRANCIS: I don't do.

MR. KAYE: Did you know what a refuge was? Did it concern you at all?

MRS. FRANCIS: Yeah. Some part of it I don't like, some part of it I like. So I don't know.

MR. KAYE: What do you think about life on the Porcupine?

MRS. FRANCIS: I think the life was very good on Porcupine. Even now, a lot of our kids was pretty young when we left all that. But even when we left, we still tell them about it. So some of our kids really know what to do out in the woods now. I sure wish for them, that they can go back up there and start village. Just like we done. Because it's more easy now, to do. We did the hard work, going with boats and dogs. Now, what they could do, is just load up those planes. They got a lot of things that make it easy now. They got chain saws, and it would be no time. They could build for their kids. They should go back in the woods.

MR. KAYE: You know, now that it's a wildlife refuge, you can't build roads in there. And they couldn't develop it. Do you think that's a good idea? What do you think about that?

MRS. FRANCIS: You mean is it a good idea that they can't build roads?

MR. KAYE: Yeah.

MRS. FRANCIS: I know they can't do that. But a lot of them have their own lands that they could build on. And they could just hunt and trap on the land. I know they gonna say, "How we gonna make money?" they gonna say. Well, there's lots of ways they can make money that I can see. Like, my husband says, "you look at the Birch tree, there's money there" and they could learn themselves. My husband is teaching now. They could learn. They come back with five snowshoes. There's a lot of money there. A little snowshoe is "two-fifty" right now. They could do that. They could make money all

kinds of way. They could tan moose skins. That's six-seven hundred dollars. You see, we could all do it if we work at it. Make "babeesh", make boat, some of them can make boat. My son over there, he knows how to make toboggan. He could make toboggans. His father make a toboggan, and sold it for four hundred dollars, not long ago. He could do that. Their wife and kids could sew for tourists. You could make good living out there. They won't have to spend as much out there as they have to spend in the city. That's all they need, is just somebody out there with them to correct them, you know? Tell them, and correct them, tell them what to do, 'cause they'll have their own meat and fish. I sure wish for that, if they'd try. They could back to a washboard, and a washtub and things like that. They don't have to put quarters in a machine! (laughing)

MR. KAYE: Did you have a radio at Old Rampart? And if so, what did you listen to?

MRS. FRANCIS: I don't remember what station my dad used to listen to that was a long time ago. But I remember one station. Gee, I want to listen to it and he turn it off. He said it waste the battery. You had to operate it with battery, you see. That was Del Rio, Texas. A lot of good country music on it. But he closed it off. He save it for only outside news.

MR. KAYE: How often did he listen to the radio?

MRS. FRANCIS: Well, when it's time for news, he know it. Two or three time a day I think.

MR. KAYE: Did he listen to music sometimes?

MRS. FRANCIS: No, he don't listen to music.

MR. KAYE: Did other families at Old Rampart have a radio?

MRS. FRANCIS: I don't think so. I never remember if anybody had a radio. Later on they did. In the 1940s they did.

MR. KAYE: What about mail? How often did you get mail at Old Rampart?

MRS. FRANCIS: Every three months it would come. Sometime with boats, sometime with toboggan, somebody'd bring mail. "Mailman" they call him. Dog team.

MR. KAYE: It would come up from Fort Yukon?

MRS. FRANCIS: Up to New Rampart. It go as far as New Ramparts border.

MR. KAYE: And then come down?

MRS. FRANCIS: Um-hum.

MR. KAYE: Was it coming from Canada at that time?

MRS. FRANCIS: No.

MR. KAYE: What kind of mail came for you?

MRS. FRANCIS: Mostly my dad get magazines. But mostly our relatives, our aunts write to us, and send presents and packages and clothes and things like that. My father get a lot of magazines because he liked to read.

MR. KAYE: What was it like when the mail came? Was that an exciting time?

MRS. FRANCIS: Oh a little thing like that was so exciting. Always excited.

MR. KAYE: What kinds of things, as a little girl, did you look forward to in the mail?

MRS. FRANCIS: Oh, a present or things like that, or to hear from our aunts or grandma, and things like that. We hear from them. Sometimes, my grandma send me brand new slippers or mitts.

MR. KAYE: Was there a post office in Old Rampart?

MRS. FRANCIS: No. Just a mail sack. We'd take over to my dad's store, and then we'd pass it out.

MR. KAYE: How about airplanes? Did airplanes land at Old Rampart?

MRS. FRANCIS: No. No planes. 1937 or 1938, I think, was the first time we see plane. We went to Fort Yukon with it. His name was Jim Dodson. That was the first plane we see.

MR. KAYE: Did you ride in it then?

MRS. FRANCIS: Yeah.

MR. KAYE: What did you think about it? Was it scary?

MRS. FRANCIS: Oh it was scary. We all hang on to each other. And when we landed at Fort Yukon, it landed way out in the Yukon River with skis.

MR. KAYE: Oh, it was winter.

MRS. FRANCIS: Yeah, that was when Joe and Clifton was there to pick us up with a dog team. Took us home to their home.

MR. KAYE: Why did you fly to Fort Yukon in 1937?

MRS. FRANCIS: My mom had to be down there at Fort Yukon.

SIMON: She was ill.

MR. KAYE: What did she have going on?

MRS. FRANCIS: I think she was going to have baby.

MR. KAYE: Would that have been Dicky?

MRS. FRANCIS: Probably, I think.

MR. KAYE: So, the plane had landed on the frozen river in front of Old Rampart? And everybody came to watch it?

MRS. FRANCIS: Oh yeah, everybody excited. They were scared for us to go in it.

MR. KAYE: And you were scared?

MRS. FRANCIS: Um hum.

MR. KAYE: Was it an open cockpit? Was it a biplane? Did it have one wing or two?

MRS. FRANCIS: No. It had one.

MR. KAYE: The store that your father had. What kind of goods did he have in it? What things do you remember that stick out in your mind?

MRS. FRANCIS: Just the goodies? Or other goods?

MR. KAYE: No, What things did he sell?

MRS. FRANCIS: He had things just like you have here, but they were different. You don't get no cake mix. You have to mix your own cake, because there's flour, dry milk, dry eggs, and all that stuff. You had to make your own cake. Very few canned stuff you get. There's rice. And no vegetable. They don't get no vegetables. Brown sugar, I remember. I hate it today yet. They don't have cake mix, but they do have cookies.

Already made cookies. They come in big boxes. All different kinds of cookies. You buy it by cases. And dried fruit, just like we got today, but they all come in small boxes. Everything come in boxes, no paper boxes.

MR. KAYE: Wooden boxes?

MRS. FRANCIS: Yeah, wood boxes.

MR. KAYE: So they had dried fruit?

MRS. FRANCIS: Yeah.

MR. KAYE: Dried apples?

MRS. FRANCIS: Everything, dried figs, dried prunes, raisins, all that we could dry.

MR. KAYE: Did you put them in water to re-hydrate them?

MRS. FRANCIS: Yeah, we boil them.

MR. KAYE: Oh, I see.

MRS. FRANCIS: You cook them then, you cool it and you eat it.

MR. KAYE: Did your father sell hardware? Guns, traps, things like that?

MRS. FRANCIS: No, just food. But besides that, a little clothing too. Like material, he sell it by yards. And canvas, and material for dresses. And khaki we call it, for parkas. And threads, and things like that he sell too. Flannel for baby diapers.

MR. KAYE: Were most of your clothes homemade?

MRS. FRANCIS: Homemade.

MR. KAYE: Everything?

MRS. FRANCIS: Yes.

MR. KAYE: Your mother would make them? And the winter gear was furs?

MRS. FRANCIS: Yes, furs.

MR. KAYE: What kind of fur was your parka made out of?

MRS. FRANCIS: Caribou, and trimmed with wolverine.

MR. KAYE: And your boots?

MRS. FRANCIS: Same thing, caribou, and the pants too. And there is snow boots over it, with moose skin.

MR. KAYE: Moose skin.

MRS. FRANCIS: Yeah.

MR. KAYE: You said the community was quite large there. Were they all native or were there any white prospectors or other white people?

MRS. FRANCIS: No, I don't remember anybody there. Everybody there were all Indians.

MR. KAYE: Except you father, he was a Swede. Did he speak cochin?

MRS. FRANCIS: No. He can't even talk English good.

MR. KAYE: Oh Yeah? So, did you learn English from your father as a child?

MRS. FRANCIS: Yes.

MR. KAYE: Were you about the only children in Old Rampart who spoke English?

MRS. FRANCIS: My sisters. Yeah, just us.

MR. KAYE: So, the other families only spoke cochin.

MRS. FRANCIS: They were all natives.

MR. KAYE: Those other families, in the winter, did they stay in Old Rampart, or did they travel out for a few months?

MRS. FRANCIS: Sometime they travel, sometime they don't. Because there were such large family and its very hard to travel with small babies.

MR. KAYE: So, some of those fathers from those families went out trapping alone, and some of them brought their families out to the camps?

MRS. FRANCIS: Yeah, camp.

MR. KAYE: I see. And they were probably as far as into Canada trapping?

MRS. FRANCIS: Yeah.

MR. KAYE: So, there was no school in Old Rampart. Did you ever go to school?

MRS. FRANCIS: No. Never went to school.

MR. KAYE: How did you learn to read and write?

MRS. FRANCIS: Well, I don't write. I just read a little bit.

MR. KAYE: What did you think of the outside world when you were a girl? You had the radio there, and your father had traveled, and you got magazines once in a while. What did you think of the lower forty-eight?

MRS. FRANCIS: I don't know. They say it don't get cold, and it's summer all the time and all that stuff we hear. I thought it would be nice to go there because we don't get cold. And there's a lot of stuff out there. Like cars, I heard. In Alaska we never get that, we don't have much of it. Even in the 1940s. Gee, I thought it would be a nice place to stay, I guess.

MR. KAYE: When you were a girl, you would have liked to have gone there?

MRS. FRANCIS: Yeah. I was going to go there one time. But the kid I was going to go with, she died, so they didn't send me outside.

MR. KAYE: Did it seem like a magical place?

MRS. FRANCIS: Yeah, something like that. In Fort Yukon they had movie that don't make sound, just a picture, and I heard that outside they have movie that's just like movie now, and all that stuff you know. And when we see picture in a book we see all that, and I thought, "gee, that'd be a nice place to stay after I grow up."

MR. KAYE: Did your father tell you stories about the lower forty-eight?

MRS. FRANCIS: Yeah. He tell me all about it. It told me "it's not as easy out there as you think it is because it's hard out there", he told me. He says that when he was a kid, once a year he would get shoes. In one year, he would get shoes, and pants because it was hard.

MR. KAYE: Was there any church in Old Rampart?

MRS. FRANCIS: Yeah. There was no church. But there was one place where they pray all the time.

MR. KAYE: Where was that?

MRS. FRANCIS: In the Chief's place. The community hall.

MR. KAYE: And what religion was it?

MRS. FRANCIS: Just like now, Episcopal.

MR. KAYE: And did they have a lay-minister, or a missionary?

MRS. FRANCIS: No, minister is hard to get in those days. They travel all over from Canadian side, and all over. They stop once in a while in summer, at Old Rampart, and they baptize the kids, and things like that. When you want to get married you had to go to Fort Yukon or Old Crow. My dad, when they got married, mom and them, they had to go clear down to Fort Yukon with a dog team. They got married and then they came back.

MR. KAYE: How often did the missionaries come by Old Rampart?

MRS. FRANCIS: Just when they have a chance.

MR. KAYE: Was your father Episcopal?

MRS. FRANCIS: I don't know what he is. But just put it down like that.

MR. KAYE: So everybody who was anything was Episcopal?

MRS. FRANCIS: Yeah.

MR. KAYE: You have big Christmas gatherings at Old Rampart. What was that like?

MRS. FRANCIS: A lot of fun. People played games. They have had a big potlatch. They start way before Christmas, and last way after Christmas, after New Year. They dance, and cook and everything. Everybody get presents, and sewings, and all kinds of stuff.

MR. KAYE: Were they homemade things?

MRS. FRANCIS: All homemade things. Snowshoes, toboggans, and everything.

MR. KAYE: Oh really? What kinds of things did you get as a little girl for Christmas?

MRS. FRANCIS: Christmas, I get a lot of new clothes. And sometimes we get a sled to slide down with. Sometimes we get more sweats. More sweet stuff. You know in those days we have turkey dinners too?

MR. KAYE: Oh really?

MRS. FRANCIS: But you know what? The turkey that we get, you have to clean it yourself. They come with feathers on it. They are not all ready like they come now.

MR. KAYE: Were they real turkeys?

MRS. FRANCIS: They were real turkeys.

MR. KAYE: Is that right?

MRS. FRANCIS: We have to clean them. My dad has a friend in Fort Yukon who send them up. So we have turkey dinners.

MR. KAYE: Were the turkeys grown in Fort Yukon?

MRS. FRANCIS: No. I don't were he get it from. He sent for it I guess.

MR. KAYE: What other social gatherings did you have in Old Rampart?

MRS. FRANCIS: Well, in those days, they make their own drinks. They make root beer for the kids so they have their drinks too.

MR. KAYE: What kind of drinks did they make?

SIMON: Home brew.

MRS. FRANCIS: They make beer.

MR. KAYE: Did you have Thanksgiving parties or others?

MRS. FRANCIS: Oh yeah, they have nice Thanksgiving party.

MR. KAYE: And you had dances?

MRS. FRANCIS: Oh yeah, always dances.

MR. KAYE: Was there a record player?

MRS. FRANCIS: Either that, or a fiddle.

MR. KAYE: So people played the fiddle?

MRS. FRANCIS: Just like now.

MR. KAYE: Did your father play?

MRS. FRANCES: No. His father played. (referring to Simon)

SIMON: A lot did.

MR. KAYE: So many people played? And you danced to that?

MRS. FRANCIS: Oh yeah, we danced, and they teach how to dance Indian dance.

SIMON: When I was forty, I would dance all the time.

MR. KAYE: And those were the Hudson Bay dances?

MRS. FRANCIS: Yes.

MR. KAYE: The Reel?

MRS. FRANCIS: The Red River Jake.

MR. KAYE: The Red River Jake? And what other dances?

MRS. FRANCIS: Square dances, eight couples. All that.

MR. KAYE: Do you remember the names of any of the other dances?

MRS. FRANCIS: You do slow dances too. The fox trot, and waltzes and all that.

MR. KAYE: Oh really?

MRS. FRANCIS: Yeah, they do that to in those days. Some people sing. They got their own songs.

MR. KAYE: They also had a record player up there?

SIMON: A wind up one.

MRS. FRANCIS: Oh everybody got their own record player.

MR. KAYE: Oh, they wind it up?

MRS. FRANCIS: I don't see a lot of radios, but I see a lot of those record players.

SIMON: At that time we don't know a lot of bad things. We just are just in the village. So never stories but when the mail man come, once every three months.

MR. KAYE: Back to your seasonal cycle during your years at Old Rampart. In the fall, did you as a girl go out berry picking?

MRS. FRANCIS: Oh yeah.

MR. KAYE: Where at?

MRS. FRANCIS: We all go berry picking up the hill. We get all kinds of berries. Raspberries, cranberries, blueberries, and blackberries, and all kinds of berries. There were red berries and we called stone berries. We put that in the meat.

MR. KAYE: Did you make pemmican?

MRS. FRANCIS: Oh, that's what we made with it.

MR. KAYE: Oh I see. And how did you make it?

MRS. FRANCIS: They half dry the meat, and then they bake it under oven. Then they get a big stone, or rock and they pound it up. And it gets all fine, and then they chop it and boil it and they get all that bone grease. And then they mix it up with the berries and the bone grease, they mix it up real good. That's how they make it. It's tasty.

MR. KAYE: And you'd carry that on the trap lines?

MRS. FRANCIS: All over, even when I went to trap, when I moved to Burnt Paw, when I went trapping we still make it. We still make it today. All the time when my kids was raised up we had it. Even now in Fairbanks, we still make it.

MR. KAYE: Oh you do?

MRS. FRANCIS: Last year we make good one.

MR. KAYE: Oh, you did?

MRS. FRANCIS: Yeah.

MR. KAYE: And how many berries, buckets, barrels?

SIMON: Ten gallon ones.

MRS. FRANCIS: They got wooden barrels in those days. Five gallon, ten gallon, twenty gallon wooden barrels they had. You know, berries is your fruit. Everybody like it so we get all we can. Some people get maybe twenty or thirty gallons of it.

MR. KAYE: Enough for all winter?

MRS. FRANCIS: Enough for all winter.

MR. KAYE: And your father hunted caribou and moose?

MRS. FRANCIS: He hunted caribou and moose.

MR. KAYE: Mostly on the river or with dogs?

MRS. FRANCIS: Mostly on the river.

MR. KAYE: And he would come back with a boatload of caribou probably?

MRS. FRANCIS: Yeah. In those days you can kill caribou any time you want to. You can kill moose any time you want to. And call moose any time you want to. You just have meat all the time. You don't see no Fish and Wildlife right behind you! (All laughing)

SIMON: You just kill what you want!

MRS. FRANCIS: Just kill what we want. No limit.

MR. KAYE: Did you girls help prepare the meat?

MRS. FRANCIS: Sure!

MR. KAYE: What was your job as a girl?

MRS. FRANCIS: We helped them. They tell us what to do. We got to do it. They tell us to look after the little one, our sisters and brothers. We look after them. They tell us bring them water, and we do that. Whatever we are old enough, and are able to do, we do. We fix a fire under the meat cache. Whatever they tell us to do, we do. Kids help lots.

We never do that very much, because white man raise us you know? We can't do that very much. My dad doesn't want us mixed up with the Indian kids.

MR. KAYE: Too much?

MRS. FRANCIS: Yeah, too much. So he kept us away. But those other kids. Gee, they helped their mother. And even little kids, maybe ten year old, they boil meat and everything like that. But we don't do that, us. But then after I got married I went true to all that. I know how to do it. I learn it from them,

MR. KAYE: Why do you think your dad wanted to keep you away from the native kids some of the time?

MRS. FRANCIS: I really don't know why he did that. They never did tell me why they were like that. But a lot of time he say we learn a lot of bad habits. Those days they really didn't want kids to learn about the Indian way.

MR. KAYE: Oh really?

MRS. FRANCIS: Yes, when I had kids, in Fort Yukon, in the 1950s I had all my kids, and when I send them to school, they come back with note a lot of times, "your kid talks native". So they got to be punished. That's why now, they try to spend all that money to try to learn them back. You know, they have bilingual programs? I'm always against that. Otherwise, all my kids would talk their language now, and English. But you see? I even spanked them, and tell them not to talk their language because they'd get punished in school.

MR. KAYE: So today, do you like the bilingual idea, or not?

MRS. FRANCIS: Well, I like it today. But they'll never learn it.

SIMON: Too late.

MRS. FRANCIS: Too late to learn it. They grow up, they never learn it. Everybody talk English. They lost it. It's dying now.

SIMON: It's all over.

MRS. FRANCIS: It's dying. Some few people will learn it, but they teach the kids how to read and write. But you see, they can teach bilingual how to read and write. But you know they'll never understand what they are saying. They have to learn from when they are small.

MR. KAYE: How about you dad? Your dad was a trapper. Was he gone for overnights, or did he come back every night?

MRS. FRANCIS: Oh no. He's gone long time. Two weeks, some time a month.

MR. KAYE: Did he bring a lot of fur back?

MRS. FRANCIS: Oh yeah, and my mom looked after it all. In those days people get a lot of fur.

MR. KAYE: Did you mother help him skin it?

MRS. FRANCIS: Oh yeah.

MR. KAYE: And you watched?

MRS. FRANCIS: Sure, I watched good. All my life, I watched good. That's why I lived this long. I could've had a hard time with my kids. I raised all my kids out in the woods. But I learned it already before I stay out there with them. So I didn't have no hard time.

MR. KAYE: Old Rampart was based on trapping, and people living at Rampart were all trappers, right?

MRS. FRANCIS: Yep.

MR. KAYE: What were the most important things to get money for? Why, what did they use their money for? To buy food?

MRS. FRANCIS: Yeah, to buy food. To get family going. You know? They raise their family with it. That's why they really had to go out and hunt lots. Those days, people really have big family. They have ten kids, twelve kids like that.

MR. KAYE: Did you ever have hard times when there was no meat? When people ever hungry at Old Rampart?

MRS. FRANCIS: Oh yeah. Sure. But you know, right under Old Rampart there was a salmon trap, we called it. There were a lot of fish. Year round, you could fish year round there. Right now, in March you could get fish. In the salmon trap the ice goes quick. And you get a lot of graylings there.

SIMON: Where was that? Right by Old Rampart?

MRS. FRANCIS: So people never get really, really starved. They don't. Because you can chop a hole, or you can go farther up, where there's open places that you could get fish.

MR. KAYE: Did people use store bought nets? Gill nets?

MRS. FRANCIS: I don't remember that. I don't think so. Maybe my dad did from the Canadian side. I know that when I go with my mom to these peoples houses, all the time these womens are making nets. Weaving nets.

MR. KAYE: Out of cotton string?

MRS. FRANCIS: Uh-huh. Twines.

MR. KAYE: And nobody uses the old bark nets that they had?

MRS. FRANCIS: No. That was way before us.

MR. KAYE: Did they hunt swans, and big geese, and so on at Old Rampart?

MRS. FRANCIS: Not at Old Rampart. It's hard to get ducks at Old Rampart. Because it's cold in the canyon. No lakes.

MR. KAYE: How about the Eskimos? You said they came to Old Rampart to visit.

MRS. FRANCIS: I know they went to Old Rampart.

MR. KAYE: Did you hear stories about the Eskimos with you were a girl?

MRS. FRANCIS: Yeah.

MR. KAYE: People told you to watch out for them? Or to be afraid of them?

MRS. FRANCIS: Yeah.

MR. KAYE: What did they say?

MRS. FRANCIS: I'm not sure, it's been a long time ago.

MR. KAYE: What about dogs, and the value of dog teams to people? How important were dogs to people back then?

MRS. FRANCIS: They are very important, the dogs. We can't do nothing without dogs in those days. You can't go hunting. You gotta have good dogs. To go trapping you

gotta have good dogs. When you haul wood, you gotta have dogs. In everything, dogs help you. Even for power, for hauling up boats in the fall. You gotta have dogs. If you're going to build house, the dogs help you. Just like a tractor today. That's why we really take care of our dogs real good.

MR. KAYE: And your father had how many dogs?

MRS. FRANCIS: My father had ten dogs sometimes. Sometime he loose a dog.

MR. KAYE: Did every the family in Old Rampart have dogs?

MRS. FRANCIS: All the families have dogs. Sometime they get short of dog feed. Then they all help each other and go out and kill game for dogs, and for the family. Because it's hard to get anything in the store way up in the canyon. You can't get no dog feed. They sure prepare for dogs, but sometimes they go short, because there's too many dogs. They get bear, and fish all that. Some spoiled meat, they fix that up and they save all that. A really big container of it. Even that, it all goes.

MR. KAYE: How much was a dog worth back then? Do you recall hearing what they would sell for? Back in the late 1920s and early 1930s when you lived at Old Rampart, what was a dog worth?

SIMON: A dog don't cost much. Maybe fifty dollar.

MRS. FRANCIS: A good dog, maybe fifty.

MR. KAYE: Back then that was a lot of money.

MRS. FRANCIS: But I tell you, in those days, it's not like now. In those days if you lost your dog, and some other person have a extra dog, they just give it to you.

MR. KAYE: Oh really?

MRS. FRANCIS: Because they give lots. If there's no meat in town, and somebody kill a moose, or a bunch of caribou, and come in, he's gonna pass meat all over each family.

MR. KAYE: There was a lot of sharing?

MRS. FRANCIS: A lot of sharing. A lot of helping each other. And when there's a lot of kids, and the wife is sick, or something. Somebody else take care of them while the father is going out hunting, and things like that. We don't see that no more now.

MR. KAYE: Those must have been happy days there at Old Rampart.

MRS. FRANCIS: Oh gee, it was good. Every time I think of it, and then think of today, I get sick. Especially the young generation. The young kids. How, how good my mother and father take care of us! When somebody come and visit they have to go in the other room. Mom would tell us to go fold clothes or something like that. So we go in the other room, we let them talk, and we don't make any noise. We stay in there 'til they go. Even if they are going to stay overnight.

MR. KAYE: Why were kids better? They didn't get in trouble then. Was it because they worked so much? They had all of these things to do?

MRS. FRANCIS: They had all that work to do and it's not so easy. Now, they get free money and it's easy to live now. What I mean by that is, back then Mom would tell us to fill up the lamps before it got dark. Now, all you do is tell the kids to turn the light on. Just press button. You don't have to go outdoors and freeze while you're filling up two or three lights. There was coal oil and gas lamps and all that every night. And the same thing, when there was no wood in the house, you got to go outdoor and bring wood in, and put in the stove. Those kids know we gotta go through this, and they all behave. Parents would talk to them, and they know the life. Nowadays, its "Oh, I don't care, I don't have to do it anyway". It's not that hard. "I don't have to work like that. Five dollar an hour is too cheap" they say. I worked, when I had my kids, all summer, for a dollar and a quarter an hour.

MR. KAYE: So you think it's the work that you have up there that kept kids out of trouble?

MRS. FRANCIS: Mostly the work. It's so easy now. The kids, they don't know what to do, so that's why they go into the drugs and alcohol.

SIMON: That's a big problem around here.

MRS. FRANCIS: That's a biggest problem, um-hum.

SIMON: You can't even trust the kids alone.

MRS. FRANCIS: Another thing too, is we'd get good spanking.

MR. KAYE: Oh yeah?

MRS. FRANCIS: I mean, you have to go out and cut your own willow, and bring it back. And then you get good spanking if you don't obey. But now, if you touch the kids a couple times with a stick, you sit in the courthouse! And they know that, the kids know that! That's why they act up more, see?

MR. KAYE: When the mail was delivered by dog team, to Old Rampart, what kind of magazines did people get? And what catalogs? Tell me about the pictures that you remember looking at.

MRS. FRANCIS: There is Sears catalog. And there's one other catalog, I think the name is, if I remember correctly, was Walter Field Company catalog. Some "Time" magazines, too. There was a big book.

MR. KAYE: Was it like "Life" magazine?

MRS. FRANCIS: I kind of remember that. The name of it, let's see, I can't think of the name of that magazine right now, but it's kind a big. I think it was "Life" magazine.

MR. KAYE: And did you little girls look over the pictures and the things advertised? What did you think?

MRS. FRANCIS: Oh, we thought that was real great. We never thought we'll see that! It was really great. A lot of time we see a car. And we see those high buildings. It was not made out of logs. We see big windows, and we see the road, it was so good. We thought that people live in a really good place. And we thought, we gonna try to go there someday.

MR. KAYE: When the mail came, could most of the adults read? Or did your father have to read the mail to them?

MRS. FRANCIS: Yeah. My dad read. My uncle reads.

MR. KAYE: So he would read to them? How many adults in Old Rampart, then, could read do you think? A few?

MRS. FRANCIS: Well, there's a lot that come, that don't stay there. Visiting. So they all read too. A lot of people never went to school, but they teach themselves in our language. The guchen language. They read that. From that they could read the books. I mean, the white way. My husband's dad, he could read the Bible, and he could read English book too.

MR. KAYE: Oh really? And your father would read the letters to the people who couldn't read?

MRS. FRANCIS: Uh-huh.

MR. KAYE: You told me about a china doll for a present once. Did that come in the mail?

MRS. FRANCIS: No, it came in the boat.

MR. KAYE: Do you remember the best present you ever got in the mail? You told me that it was an exciting time, and sometimes you got presents. Do you remember any presents that you got as a girl?

MRS. FRANCIS: Yeah. One time I had a necklace, made out of shiny beads, and it was very pretty. I was so excited. I didn't know I would be so, in my whole life. I was so happy when I got it. I even remember who sent it to me. Nina Bergman, she sent us Christmas presents. Nina Bergman's daughter Adeline, we were the same age. And we really like each other, her and I. And when we grow up we move away from each other. Never see her yet.

MR. KAYE: You told me that the dog team trip from Burnt Paw to Old Village was less than a day. How long did it take to get from Burnt Paw to Old Rampart by dog team?

MRS. FRANCIS: Burnt Paw to Old Rampart?

MR. KAYE: Um-hum.

MRS. FRANCIS: It take one day.

SIMON: It's thirty- five miles.

MR. KAYE: How about from Old Rampart to Fort Yukon?

MRS. FRANCIS: It will take about three days, I think.

SIMON: Three days.

MR. KAYE: You told me how you'd stack snow blocks to make a playhouse. What shape was it? Was it like an igloo, rounded? Or was it ...

MRS. FRANCIS: No, we had a square.

MR. KAYE: What did you use for a roof?

MRS. KAYE: Same thing.

MR. KAYE: Same thing? The roof was snow blocks?

MRS. FRANCIS: Yeah, we just cut bigger blocks. Because up there, the snow, it's just like floor. Wind all the time, so it's just hard.

MR. KAYE: And you played “mothers”?

MRS. FRANCIS: Oh yeah.

MR. KAYE: Did you have dolls that you used for children?

MRS. FRANCIS: Well, small dolls. We make cloth dolls. And we take that down too.

MR. KAYE: You made them yourself?

MRS. FRANCIS: Um-hum, and our mothers help us.

MR. KAYE: When you were a little girl, did you view Fort Yukon as like, “ the big city”?

MRS. FRANCIS: Oh yeah!

MR. KAYE: What was it like, thinking of going to Fort Yukon?

MRS. FRANCIS: Oh, when we were going to go to Fort Yukon, we were so happy. We were doing to go down and see our aunts, and relatives. We can’t even sleep the first night! And when we go around in Fort Yukon, we see that town there. And oh gosh, it was just good fun! When we come around the bend, we stop. And we all have to put on our good clothes.

MR. KAYE: Oh really? Before you got to town?

MRS. FRANCIS: Yeah, before we land. Because in those days, people have respect so much. The whole town come to the bank.

MR. KAYE: Oh really?

MRS. FRANCIS: Oh yeah! The whole town come to the bank to see us come! All that you got to shake hands with! All over people stay, in every village, the people that go out. Some stay at Birch Creek, and down Beaver and all over people stay for winter with their kids. And they all come in. Every time, they see a boat coming, they tell each other and they just run to the bank.

MR. KAYE: So, when your family came in, did they come in before other camps came from say, Birch Creek, and Beaver Creek?

MRS. FRANCIS: Sometime.

MR. KAYE: So you got to meet people coming in too?

MRS. FRANCIS: Oh yeah.

MR. KAYE: What's the first think you did when you got in Fort Yukon?

MRS. FRANCIS: The first thing we do is.. My aunts, they save some things for us, 'cause we stay out in the woods a long time. So they get everything ready for us. They have eggs, and oranges, and apples and things like that. The first thing we do is eat some fresh stuff. Fresh fruits.

MR. KAYE: And you never got fresh apples and oranges at Old Rampart?

MRS. FRANCIS: No, not over the whole winter.

MR. KAYE: So that must have been really good for you? Something to look forward to?

MRS. FRANCIS: Oh yeah!

SIMON: There weren't no fresh foods there all winter. No potatoes or anything.

MRS. FRANCIS: Way afterwards, they grow potatoes.

MR. KAYE: Oh, at Old Rampart, after you left?

MRS. FRANCIS: No, at Fort Yukon.

MR. KAYE: Oh, at Fort Yukon they grew potatoes. Oh I see. Your father, he stocked up his boat for the trading post at Fort Yukon. Did he buy his trade goods at Fort Yukon? Or did he order them?

MRS. FRANCIS: No, he ordered them, and then it'd come on a boat.

MR. KAYE: The paddle, or steamboat?

MRS. FRANCIS: Uh-huh, the steamboat.

MR. KAYE: Oh really? Which boat did it come on? Do you remember?

SIMON: The Yukon, I think.

MR. KAYE: The Yukon? And he would order it from the lower forty=eight somewhere?

MRS. FRANCIS: Yeah. I don't know from where, though. But he order it from maybe Seattle, way out there somewhere. Someplace round there.

MR. KAYE: Did anybody in your family keep his business receipts? His records for his trading post?

MRS. FRANCIS: There was, but I don't know what happened to it.

SIMON: All lost.

MRS. FRANCIS: All lost.

MR. KAYE: All lost in the flood maybe?

MRS. FRANCIS: I think only my brother got one of his book. A date book.

MR. KAYE: Oh really? Dicky does? In Fort Yukon?

MRS. FRANCIS: Uh-huh.

MR. KAYE: I'll have to look him up when I go there. Were there cars in Fort Yukon at that time?

SIMON: Maybe one or two.

MRS. FRANCIS: Not all the time, I am growing up, I was about ten or eleven year old. That's the time we see one automobile, and one truck.

MR. KAYE: Oh really? Did you get a ride in it?

MRS. FRANCIS: We ride it in all the time. Every chance we get. Up where they have the camp now, up where the town is, there's no village up that way. One trip up that way is a dollar, one trip down to the slew is a dollar.

MR. KAYE: Oh really? Even back then, a dollar?

MRS. FRANCIS: Yeah.

MR. KAYE: Did you know about everybody in Fort Yukon then?

MRS. FRANCIS: No.

MR. KAYE: It was a pretty big town, even then?

MRS. FRANCIS: Well, my father, he doesn't want us to go downtown. There's a village down there. There's us, and there's white people. They don't stay together at that time. So we stay way up.

MR. KAYE: Were there any horses in Fort Yukon?

MRS. FRANCIS: Yeah. They have horses.

MR. KAYE: What did they use them for?

MRS. FRANCIS: They use them haul wood. I think that's about all, yeah?

SIMON: Yeah.

MRS. FRANCIS: Haul wood, all the time haul wood.

MR. KAYE: You told me that at Old Rampart, you got a radio station from Del Rio, Texas?

MRS. FRANCIS: Uh-huh.

MR. KAYE: How was the reception? Could you hear it pretty good?

MRS. FRANCIS: Oh yeah! We liked to listen to it, but our Dad won't let us.

MR. KAYE: To the music?

MRS. FRANCIS: He say it waste the battery.

MR. KAYE: Did you listen to the news? Or, were you too little to be interested in the news?

MRS. FRANCIS: I listened to the news after I was ten year old.

MR. KAYE: I wanted to ask you about the church, the Episcopal Church there. You told me a missionary would come through sometimes?

MRS. FRANCIS: Um-hum.

MR. KAYE: Where did they come from?

MRS. FRANCIS: Mostly, they come from Canadian side.

MR. KAYE: The Canadian side. Where were they based? At Fort McPherson?

MRS. FRANCIS: Well, New Rampart.

MR. KAYE: And they'd come through and hold services?

MRS. FRANCIS: They come through, and they'd go all the way down. At every camp, they stop. They make service, and they baptize kids.

MR. KAYE: Did they marry people?

MRS. FRANCIS: Oh yeah. They married people.

MR. KAYE: How long would they stay?

MRS. FRANCIS: They stay as long as it take to get through. Or as long as the way their transportation is. If they come in a boat, and the boat got to go in the morning, why, they got to go.

MR. KAYE: And sometimes they came with a dog team?

MRS. FRANCIS: Sometime they come with dog team.

MR. KAYE: Do you remember? Did they give the service in guchen, or in English?

MRS. FRANCIS: Cochin.

MR. KAYE: Where they native ministers?

MRS. FRANCIS: Yeah.

MR. KAYE: Oh, they were? From Canada?

MRS. FRANCIS: Uh-huh.

MR. KAYE: I was going to ask you about what your mother taught you about traditional, native belief, religious belief. What did your mother tell you about Guchen religion belief and the spirit?

MRS. FRANCIS: I don't know.

MR. KAYE: Did she talk about it at all?

MRS. FRANCIS: She tell us there is a god. And she tell us that we have to go to Church.

MR. KAYE: So, your mother was Christian?

MRS. FRANCIS: Uh-huh.

MR. KAYE: And she didn't focus too much on the native beliefs, from before the missionaries came?

MRS. FRANCIS: Yeah.

MR. KAYE: In 1941 you moved to Burnt Paw from Old Rampart, right?

MRS. FRANCIS: Yes.

MR. KAYE: Did your father move there, and live with you too?

MRS. FRANCIS: Yes.

MR. KAYE: Did he trap himself?

MRS. FRANCIS: A little bit, with us, yes. He showed us, but he was pretty sick.

MR. KAYE: He was sick then?

MRS. FRANCIS: uh-huh.

MR. KAYE: So you girls did most of the trapping?

MRS. FRANCIS: uh-huh.

MR. KAYE: What was wrong with him? Do you remember?

MRS. FRANCIS: He had asthma, and heart trouble.

MR. KAYE: You said he left Old Rampart. Why? You said it was a hard life up there, but was his trading post not too profitable?

MRS. FRANCIS: Oh that went way before that. They got people steadily moving away.

MR. KAYE: Oh, I see. So as you got older, people started leaving Old Rampart?

MRS. FRANCIS: uh-huh. Because they want their kids to go to school.

MR. KAYE: Oh, in Fort Yukon? So by the time your family left in 1941, how many families were left?

MRS. FRANCIS: Just two family was there.

MR. KAYE: Oh, I see. So his trading post wasn't profitable any more?

MRS. FRANCIS: No.

MR. KAYE: And he wanted to become a trapper? So he moved to Burnt Paw, were there's better trapping?

MRS. FRANCIS: Uh-huh, better trapping.

MR. KAYE: He couldn't trap so well, so it was more up to you and your sister?

MRS. FRANCIS: Yep, me and my sister. But I lost my sister, so that's what's really hard.

MR. KAYE: Whose place was Burnt Paw? Was that Richard Martin's place?

MRS. FRANCIS: John Herbert's place. That's uncle Richard's step-dad.

MR. KAYE: So, that was Richard Martin's stepfather that was his camp, at Burnt Paw?

MRS. FRANCIS: Did he want you to move there?

MR. KAYE: Yeah. And then it turned over to Uncle Richard. And Uncle Richard went in the Army, and he want us to move there.

MR. KAYE: Oh, so that would have been in 1941. Was he drafted into the Army?

MRS. FRANCIS: Uh-huh.

MR. KAYE: Did he ever go off to the war?

MRS. FRANCIS: Sure, he went off to the Army. He was in the Army. You heard about that "Adack" they call it? He was there.

MR. KAYE: So he was at Adack fighting the Japanese? Oh ok. So by 1947, when you left Burnt Paw for Fort Yukon in the summer, is that right?

MRS. FRANCIS: Uh-huh.

MR. KAYE: So is that when your father decided he would stay in Fort Yukon?

MRS. FRANCIS: Um-hum.

MR. KAYE: And that's when he told you, you should get married?

MRS. FRANCIS: Um-hum.

MR. KAYE: By 1947, how many families were living all year up the river? Spending all winter out?

MRS. FRANCIS: Sam Herbert, Joe Ward, that's all.

MR. KAYE: That's all? So by 1947 most of the families that had lived in camps...

SIMON: There was David Johns.

MR. KAYE: OK, there was a David Johns at Old Rampart?

MRS. FRANCIS: He stay there just on and off though. Because their kids was going to school in Gulkeetzik.

MR. KAYE: So the camps that had been all along the Porcupine, that were occupied year round, were pretty much moved into Fort Yukon by 1947, except for those people? So, from 1947 to 1957 you lived at Old Village?

MRS. FRANCIS: Yes

MR. KAYE: And by 1957, you were the last family to remain on the river? Is that right?

MRS. FRANCIS: Yes.

MR. KAYE: And you had three of your kids when you lived up there. Which ones were those?

MRS. FRANCIS: Two girls and a boy, their name is Josie, Linda and Charles.

MR. KAYE: And Arleta, and Simon, Jr. came after you moved to Gulkeetzik from Old Village, is that right?

MRS. FRANCIS: Yep.

MR. KAYE: And all five of those kids lived at Canyon Village when you moved up there in 1962, is that right?

MRS. FRANCIS: Uh-huh.

MR. KAYE: How was life up there? How did you like Canyon Village?

MRS. FRANCIS: Canyon Village was good, but everything was getting expensive. It costs higher. Airplane fare, and all that. So it was pretty hard for us to get transportation back and forth to Fort Yukon. When somebody get sick, it's hard because it costs too much. Then, Simon got a job in Gulkeetzik. When they were gonna build that schoolhouse. So that's why we went to Gulkeetzik. He got hired there, so we went there. At the same time my two oldest girls were old enough to go to high school. So, we moved there, and that fall went to Oregon.

MR. KAYE: The other family, there's Richard Carroll, and Richard Martin, and Stanley Jonas, did they start to leave at the same time as you?

MRS. FRANCIS: Well, Richard Carroll left one year before us.

MR. KAYE: So he was the first family?

MRS. FRANCIS: Uh-huh.

MR. KAYE: Is it true that when his family left, there wasn't enough kids to keep a teacher in Canyon Village?

MRS. FRANCIS: Right.

MR. KAYE: Is that one of the reasons people left Canyon Village?

MRS. FRANCIS: Um-hum.

MR. KAYE: I see. In 1962, when you guys decided to go up and start a new town, that must have been a tremendous adventure, an exciting thing.

MRS. FRANCIS: Really. It's pretty hard to move in that month of the year, September. September thirteenth we got up there. And it's scary. Because house gotta be built. And

all that wood you gotta prepare. And all that meat you gotta get for the kids, and all that. But you, kids and all, we really work hard. By the time it got cold, it was warm that fall, but by the time it got cold, we were all inside the house.

MR. KAYE: Why did you move so late, up to Canyon Village?

MRS. FRANCIS: I don't know why. They were waiting for something, I think. That's what I didn't like, when were going to go up. It was too late! But anyway, we decide we're ready, so they all left.

MR. KAYE: It was a dream to start a new community. What kind of community did you envision it becoming?

SIMON: We talked about how people were getting bad habits, and wanted to get the kids away from that.

MRS. FRANCIS: We really try to move away from these things. People start to drink too much, and all these things were going on that we never seen in our life. So we thought we should get our kids, and get ourself out of there. It'll be a better place for us up there. That's why they hurry quick and build a schoolhouse, and get a teacher. We planned it good. But then it didn't turn out.

MR. KAYE: It did for a few years though, right?

MRS. FRANCIS: Six years.

MR. KAYE: Six years.

MRS. FRANCIS: I was there six years. It was really good because we got fresh meat all the time, and we could get all the fruit we want, berries. Everything. It was real good, a good place.

MR. KAYE: Who, would you say, was the leader of the Canyon Village project?

MRS. FRANCIS: Richard Carroll.

MR. KAYE: Was it his idea to go up there?

MRS. FRANCIS: Him, and Uncle Richard. When we got up there, we make meetings. There was just a few of us, but we make meetings all the time. We elected Chief.

MR. KAYE: Who was the Chief?

MRS. FRANCIS: I think Uncle Richard. Who was the first Chief? And he was Chief too. (referring to Simon)

MR. KAYE: Simon was the second Chief?

MRS. FRANCIS: And Stanley was our lay reader. There was a lay reader. So every Sunday, he make Church.

MR. KAYE: Oh really?

MRS. FRANCIS: And then us, women Chiefs, we make.

MR. KAYE: Were you women part of the government there? Part of the meetings they had there to decide things?

MRS. FRANCIS: Oh yeah. Decide things. "BIA" help us lots.

MR. KAYE: Did they help fund it with money?

MRS. FRANCIS: Oh yeah, they gave us everything to work with. Chainsaws and stuff like that. They help us quite a bit. They come up and have meeting with us.

MR. KAYE: Oh they did?

MRS. FRANCIS: Preachers come up, and a lot of people come up to visit us, and see how we are doing, and all that.

MR. KAYE: When you guys planned this, when you first went up, did you have it in mind to get more families moved up there from Fort Yukon?

MRS. FRANCIS: Um-hum. We did. We did have one. A big family moved up there. It was Walter Wilham, he had eight kids.

MR. KAYE: Did he leave later?

SIMON: There was John Erlich.

MRS. FRANCIS: John Erlich moved up there too. He had a lot of kids too. But when he moved up there with his boys, and his wife gonna have baby, but she died.

MR. KAYE: So the families that were up there for the six years, it was just four families?

MRS. FRANCIS: Um-hum. No, and Walter, too. Walter staid with us for long time.

MR. KAYE: So altogether, would you say there were five families on average that staid there at Canyon Village?

MRS. FRANCIS: Yeah, five families. Because, Uncle, they didn't have no kids. John Jonas had those kids. Mary, and Frieda, and Ettie May and Kenny Jonas.

MR. KAYE: So, the Porcupine River is a lot different than when you were a kid. People use to be living on it. All the way up through Canada?

MRS. FRANCIS: All the way up.

MR. KAYE: And now, there's no one.

MRS. FRANCIS: Nothing.

MR. KAYE: There's a lot of fur out there that nobody's catching.

MRS. FRANCIS: It's all cleared up I guess.

MR. KAYE: Bella, tell me about your mother.

MRS. FRANCIS: I don't know. My mother never tell us too much. I gather up all my old stories from my mother-in-law. (laughing) My mother was really young when their dad died, you know? She must be real young. Because next to her was my uncle Richard Martin and that one was after their dad died. And a month earlier, he was born. So mother must be very small, very little. Anyway my grandfather, Dick Martin, he came from Canadian side. Also my grandma came from Canadian side.

MR. KAYE: Did you know your grandma?

MRS. FRANCIS: Oh yeah! I say! She died when I was sixteen.

MR. KAYE: Did she tell you stories about the old days, before white people?

MRS. FRANCIS: She didn't tell us very much about that. But most she tell us, mostly, stories about a future, and what kind of life we're gonna have. I mean, what we should do and all of that. I remember, she used to us that all the time. But she did have stories though. She used to tell stories to another friend and I. I picked some of that up. My grandfather, he had a caribou fence. And she used to say that she was very little when it happened. They used to stay with their grandma. That's away up around Old Crow, in the back, I guess. Around there.

MR. KAYE: So, they used to camp by caribou fences?

MRS. FRANCIS: Oh yeah. That's were they travel around in those days. They travel around lots. That's how they get their meat for whole winter.

MR. KAYE: Did she say if those were really hard times?

MRS. FRANCIS: She said, they have hard times. But their dad always go over, I can't remember the name of it, I remember her way, she called it Aleutian Islands she called it.

SIMON: Cardin Island.

MRS. FRANCIS: Cardin Island I mean. She said her dad go over there and get some things all the time. Supplies, you know.

MR. KAYE: Would that be Barter Island, or Herschel?

MRS. FRANCIS: Uh-huh.

MR. KAYE: Oh, Barter Island.

MRS. FRANCIS: There's Herschel Island over there too?

MR. KAYE: There's Herschel Island, and Barter Island. Barter, is were Kaktovik is.

MRS. FRANCIS: Oh no, the other one I think.

MR. KAYE: Herschel, where the whalers go?

MRS. FRANCIS: That's right I think. Because she said there was a lot of Eskimo there.

MR. KAYE: A lot of Eskimos. Yeah, that would probably be Herschel. Were there times when people were hungry back then?

MRS. FRANCIS: Oh yeah. Sometime, a lot of people don't get nothing, you know? She tell us about that. She tell her friends about that.

MR. KAYE: So, your grandmother lived with you for a while?

MRS. FRANCIS: After I grow up. Then grandma lived with us a lot of time in Old Rampart. That's the time, I mean, when she would show us what to do. She spend all her time to talk to us about how we are supposed to be, and how we gonna live our life in

the world. She just talked religion a lot. She's the one who taught me how say the Lord's Prayer and all that in our language, when I was real young.

MR. KAYE: Your grandmother?

MRS. FRANCIS: My grandmother did. And even when was very old, she never stay home. She always wanted to go out. So since we don't go to school, I get to go out with her lots. We slept sometimes, a couple of nights in a tent, she tell me about. How to keep the tent warm. And what to do if the cold weather come. And what to do if we get hurt. She always catch a lot of rabbits, and grouse. She cleaned them, and she showed me how to clean them. She know how to sew with rabbit skins. She weave. And she make insoles out of it. All that stuff she do.

MR. KAYE: Do you figure that you learned as much from your grandmother, as your mother?

MRS. FRANCIS: Oh, my mother never taught me nothing. I mean, before we went trapping, she never taught us how to sew. But, then, afterwards, I guess she was going to teach me, but I had to go out on the trap line. She did a lot of sewing for us though. After I got married, I taught myself mostly. Copy stuff. That's how I learned how to sew. I learned lots from my mother-in-law, "old Bella". I learned how to tan skins, and I learned how to prepare meats, how to smoke them. I really learned lots from her. I wish I had tape recorder of when she was with me, 'cause all day long she tell story.

MR. KAYE: What was your grandmother's name?

MRS. FRANCIS: My grandmother's name is Mae Martin.

MR. KAYE: Oh, Mae Martin.

MRS. FRANCIS: Mae Martin, then she got married again, you know. When she died it was Mae Herbert.

MR. KAYE: Did she use a guchen name? Your grandmother?

MRS. FRANCIS: I never did found out. But my grandfather guchen name, I know. Her father, "Olroduk". I know that one.

MR. KAYE: Did you know your grandfather?

MRS. FRANCIS: Oh yeah! Sure, my aunt Abby take her up the Sheenjek River all the time.

MR. KAYE: And his name was Dick Martin?

MRS. FRANCIS: No, Dick Martin drowned when my mother and them was small I said!

MR. KAYE: Oh, O.K.

MRS. FRANCIS: The one I am talking about is my mother's grandpa.

MR. KAYE: Your mother's grandpa, oh, O.K.

MRS. FRANCIS: Yeah, I sure remember him, all right. My grandpa, "Olroduk."

MR. KAYE: Did he talk about the old days?

MRS. FRANCIS: Oh I don't understand him when he talks! He's so old, I can't understand. And then. . . Do you know?. . . well, there's, old people nowadays. Well white people don't know this, but I know. Real old people maybe, up around the Canadian side. Well I call it this way; they've got the same language I do, but I don't understand them?

MR. KAYE: A different dialect?

MRS. FRANCIS: No, it's not different dialect. It's "high" words.

MR. KAYE: Oh yeah?

MRS. FRANCIS: Uh-huh, higher words. That's what they use. But we're behind. We just make it out. It was from them, to me. Just like you're learning.

MR. KAYE: Oh really?

MRS. FRANCIS: Uh-huh. You can't say it good. That's the way we are.

MR. KAYE: Oh really?

MRS. FRANCIS: So, I can't understand him.

MR. KAYE: So, when your mother came to Old Rampart, she came with her mother and father?

MRS. FRANCIS: Her mom, I guess.

MR. KAYE: Only her Mom?

MRS. FRANCIS: I guess so, yes.

MR. KAYE: Your grandmother?

MRS. FRANCIS: Yeah, No wait a minute, she got married again, to this John Herbert, so they stay at Burnt Paw.

MR. KAYE: So you had both your grandparents there?

MRS. FRANCIS: Uh-huh. Oh yeah, lucky, I had both of them.

MR. KAYE: So there was Mae, then, and your grandfather's name, was what?

MRS. FRANCIS: John Herbert.

MR. KAYE: And your mother, when she first came to Old Rampart, didn't speak English did she?

MRS. FRANCIS: Oh sure! I think she did a little bit.

MR. KAYE: So your father probably taught her most of her English?

MRS. FRANCIS: Well, her sisters and all that too. And other people who go up to Old Rampart. Like I said, my father had a hard time teaching anybody English because he can't talk good himself.

MR. KAYE: Now, about Simon now, Bella. You played with him when he was a little boy, when he was at Old Rampart, is that right?

MRS. FRANCIS: Uh-huh.

MR. KAYE: He's what, a year older than you?

MRS. FRANCIS: He's four year older than me.

MR. KAYE: Did you play with him very much?

MRS. FRANCIS: Well, he was next-door neighbor, see?

MR. KAYE: And later, after you moved to Burnt Paw, he used to come up to visit, and bring the mail?

MRS. FRANCIS: Uh-huh. Sometime he bring mail. And sometime in the boat, he just go past, and stuff like that.

MR. KAYE: Do you think he had “eyes” for you, even back then?

MRS. FRANCIS: I don’t know. He never say anything. So we don’t exactly say things like ordinary person. So that’s about it. I didn’t pay no attention to him because I’d be busy sometime.

MR. KAYE: I want to ask you about the Eskimos. When you were very young, you said that Eskimos came to Old Rampart to trade. Do you remember what they brought to trade?

MRS. FRANCIS: Furs, I guess. There was one family anyway.

SIMON: The Eskimos go to Dan Kaetzel there.

MRS. FRANCES: That’s right, they go to Dan Kaetzel too. They work for him, I guess.

MR. KAYE: Did your father give credit to people?

MRS. FRANCIS: Uh-huh. He do. We got a big, thick book.

MR. KAYE: Did he sell guns?

MRS. FRANCIS: Oh yeah.

MR. KAYE: What kind? Do you remember?

MRS. FRANCIS: I remember, “2.70, and “30.30”.

MR. KAYE: A couple of things about your childhood. You said you’d go sledding, you liked to go sledding. Did you go down on moose skins, or sleds, or both?

MRS. FRANCIS: It was both. They make little toboggan, and little sled. Simon used to have a little toboggan. And he have little sleds, and all that stuff he had. But, you know what we used to do? We get nice fur coat, and we go down head first, on our back. It was real slippery! We never think of wearing it out!

MR. KAYE: Was that caribou fur? I bet your mother didn’t like that!

MRS. FRANCIS: Aaygh! I thought she was going to kill me one time! Simon was that one who started that. He's the worst one. Everything he start. Every time, he always start everything!

MR. KAYE: You said you used to play football. What did you use for a football?

MRS. FRANCIS: They make it.

MR. KAYE: Homemade, out of what?

MRS. FRANCIS: Out of skins, and they stuff it.

SIMON: Out of caribou hide.

MR. KAYE: And what was it stuffed with?

MRS. FRANCIS: Probably hair, I guess. They make that kind for us.

MR. KAYE: Do you remember the first time you had money, as a child? Do you remember the first thing you ever bought?

MRS. FRANCIS: To tell you the truth, me, all the time I had money all the time, I remember. All my life, I had money. My dad had money all the time. Then, when I make my first catch, I made. I remember that. I made almost three thousand dollar, we made on that first catch.

MR. KAYE: After you moved to Burnt Paw?

MRS. FRANCIS: Yes, Burnt Paw.

MR. KAYE: Oh really? Was that money for your family?

MRS. FRANCIS: Yeah, all of us. My mom catch some hogs, too. But it was all of us together.

MR. KAYE: You once told me that it was only after you were a little older that you helped your mom, and did things around. Did you ever help tan moose skins?

MRS. FRANCIS: My mom never tan moose skins. But my mother-in-law did.

MR. KAYE: So you helped her then?

MRS. FRANCIS: Oh yeah.

MR. KAYE: How about your grandmother?

MRS. FRANCIS: Oh yeah. I wanted to learn bad.

MR. KAYE: And did you help take care of your brothers and sisters?

MRS. FRANCIS: Oh yeah, I have to! Because, I am way older you know. I took care of them all. I was with my mom when my brother was born.

MR. KAYE: Where was that?

MRS. FRANCIS: Old Rampart.

MR. KAYE: Oh, he was born there? Who delivered him?

MRS. FRANCIS: Well, I was alone with her when he was born. But afterwards, there was a family across the river, and that lady came over.

MR. KAYE: You mean you were the only one there?

MRS. FRANCIS: Only one there. Well, my dad was there too, but I was only one there when my mother had Dicky. It was cold too. It took long time, 'til that lady come over, because it was so cold. It was fifty below.

MR. KAYE: Was that scary?

MRS. FRANCIS: I'll say.

MR. KAYE: So, you were in the same...it was at your house?

MRS. FRANCIS: Oh yes, at my mom and dad's house.

MR. KAYE: And you were how old then?

MRS. FRANCIS: I think I was eleven, or twelve.

MR. KAYE: Were you afraid that your mom might die?

MRS. FRANCIS: Yeah. I thought she gonna die. Because the rest of my sisters were crying, and my dad, he just keep the house warm. Then that woman came. Only one, two family. Just us and that woman's family.

MR. KAYE: So a woman came?

MRS. FRANCIS: Yeah, she came, and fix everything up. And it was a boy. That's Dicky Strong.

MR. KAYE: People at Old Rampart got along pretty good?

MRS. FRANCIS: Oh yeah.

MR. KAYE: It was a happy community?

MRS. FRANCIS: Far as I know, everybody was pretty good, and happy.

MR. KAYE: What did you think of white people? I know your father was white. But, the Indian kids, did you have any special thoughts about white people, as opposed to Indians?

(answer cut off at end of side three, cassette two)

MR. KAYE: Did you make jam at Old Rampart?

MRS. FRANCIS: Oh yeah.

MR. KAYE: Out of rosehips?

MRS. FRANCIS: Uh-huh, all kinds of berries.

MR. KAYE: Where did you store your berries? Was it in a root cellar?

MRS. FRANCIS: Uh-huh. Under the house in cellars.

MR. KAYE: I want to talk about your trap line a little bit. You know, when you were at Burnt Paw, and you had your own trap line? And were independent? Did you carry a tent in your toboggan?

MRS. FRANCIS: Yeah.

MR. KAYE: All the time?

MRS. FRANCIS: But just in the fall.

MR. KAYE: Did you have a little stove for it?

MRS. FRANCIS: Uh-huh. Every one of them. You know, my dad was a stove maker.

He made all the stoves.

MR. KAYE: Out of tin?

MRS. FRANCIS: Uh-huh

MR. KAYE: Out of old cans?

MRS. FRANCIS: No, out of that stuff, just like on Uncle Richard's roof.

SIMON: Galvanized tin.

MRS. FRANCIS: They are thick, you know, it's good tin.

MR. KAYE: Oh I see, so he ordered sheet metal, and made stoves?

MRS. FRANCIS: Yeah

MR. KAYE: Did you ever start a fire, when you were out on the trap line without matches? Did you ever use flint or anything?

MRS. FRANCIS: No, we never tried that. But it was possible.

MR. KAYE: You told me that you used to carry a survival kit when you took the plane from Fairbanks to Fort Yukon, or back. Do you still do that?

MRS. FRANCIS: Oh yeah. I got knives, and everything in there.

MR. KAYE: What do you have in there?

MRS. FRANCIS: Well, now we got steel rabbit snares, so I take a couple of rabbit snares. I take fish hook and line. Then I have a little can, like this cup, and I put those little cubes of soup in it. And sometimes I put little packets of cocoa or milk in it. Just enough to just get by. In case we get hurt, I put some Tylenol. All that stuff too. And a piece of looking glass I always put in my purse. And knife, I carry knife all the time.

MR. KAYE: What is one of your most memorable experiences from your trap line? When you were out alone, going out. Is there anything that you remember bad or good, when you think back to it?

MRS. FRANCIS: It's pretty hard to remember way back. I remember one time, when I was going to island, there was a lot of snow. You got to learn lots when you're out. But my Uncle Richard, really taught me good too you know? 'Cause he was up there after he got discharged from the Army, he was up there with us. We were really out of moose.

And he said, "Well here's an island, maybe there is moose up there. So I'll go far as there with you". He said. My sister Jean, she went with me too. So I went up there, and there was fresh moose track, so he said "over there". He said. "moose it on island, and I want you to chase it to me." So I went, he show me good, what to do. If the moose look like it got scared, and run fast, that mean he already spotted us. So no use following it. But if it go into island, easy, "chase it to me, were I am sitting". Then go back the same way, because it really bad, thick brush and lot of snow. Because of the wind on that side, there's hard snow. Gosh, I went over there, and it went slow, it went slow in the brush there. But even that, I could even see that side, the island. And I get in the middle and I get stuck. My snowshoe broke, and t here was about that much snow. (demonstrating) I had one heck of a time getting out of there. He waited in the cold. Going back and forth. Finally, he just put on his snowshoe and meet me. He know my snowshoe is stuck. I mean broken. He get me on trail, and he asks me, he says, "you guys make fire over there." I said, "you don't have to go, we'll go back down." "I'll go follow it" he said. So we made fire there, me and sister, and we fix the dogs, and we just left it like that, and pretty soon, we hear shooting. Not very long afterwards here comes Uncle and he said we were going to go back down. So we went back down. We just spent all day like that. That's the toughest time, just getting my snowshoe broke in the middle of the island were there is loose snow. And if it wasn't for Uncle to help me, I didn't know how to crawl out of there. You can put that down. You don't have to put the whole moose down. That was maybe forty, forty-five years ago maybe more than that. Even today, they might ask question, 'cause that much is against the law now!

MR. KAYE: You told me one time that on the trap line you cut yourself. And you used spruce pitch? Did that stop the bleeding?

MRS. FRANCIS: Oh yeah. Sometime I cut myself pretty bad.

MR. KAYE: With an axe or a knife?

MRS. FRANCIS: Knife.

MR. KAYE: Your arm, you cut?

MRS. FRANCIS: No, my finger. I put it together, and stopped the bleeding. And I went out to the tree and get some. And I heat it up and put that on it and wrapped it up. Stopped right there. Pitch is real good for that. It's something in it that draws all the poison, you know? Even right now. Pitch is very good. When I was teaching over there in University, I told them that. They say, "what we gonna do if we get hurt out in the woods?" You know, when you are floating down Yukon River, and out. If you on the beach, and you tip over, and lost everything. Before the rescue plane come. If you got a big cut, rinse it off, and dry it off real good. And get some pitch. And if you can, heat it up in the sun, or put it in your mouth. Heat it up. You put it right over that cut, and

wrap it up. You won't get blood poisoning, or nothing. 'Til you get help. And if it's two or three days, or even a week, keep on doing that.

MR. KAYE: What were you doing when you cut yourself?

MRS. FRANCIS: I think I was cutting up meat.

MR. KAYE: Did you go out, and make a cut in a spruce tree to get the pitch?

MRS. FRANCIS: No. The sap of a spruce tree just runs down in the summer. In winter they come up easy because they are frozen.

MR. KAYE: When you were young, helping your grandmother. Did she tell you how to do things? Or did you learn by watching her?

MRS. FRANCIS: Well a lot of time, my grandma always tell me, "do that, you can't learn if you watch me". Make sinew. She give it to me. Even washing. I always try to rinse for her. She say, "don't stand there, now you wash this one now!" She teach me like that.

MR. KAYE: I wanted to talk to you finally here, about the changes that happened in the 1930s. I start with the airplane. You said about 1937 was when the first plane came to Old Rampart?

MRS. FRANCIS: I'm pretty sure, yeah.

MR. KAYE: It brought your mother to Fort Yukon to have a baby?

MRS. FRANCIS: Uh-huh.

MR. KAYE: I was wondering, how did it happen to come to Old Rampart, did it come to get your mother?

MRS. FRANCIS: Uh-huh.

MR. KAYE: How did they know she needed a flight to Fort Yukon?

MRS. FRANCIS: Well, it's not that bad. A lot of people go back and forth, and send letters all the time. My father go up to Old Crow with dog team all the time. And they wire down.

MR. KAYE: So they sent a message? And your mother decided to have that baby at Fort Yukon Hospital?

MRS. FRANCIS: Yeah.

MR. KAYE: So people knew, about, when it was coming?

MRS. FRANCIS: Yeah, what day.

MR. KAYE: What was it like when it finally came up to Old Rampart? Was it exciting for everybody?

MRS. FRANCIS: Oh gee, everybody just run out. We never see plane like that.

MR. KAYE: Do you remember running down to the plane? What did you think about it when you first saw it sitting there?

MRS. FRANCIS: We tell mom, "I don't want to go, I want to stay with Daddy." We gonna take a boat down you know? She said, "no you gotta go along, hurry up and get dressed."

MR. KAYE: She wanted you to go down in the plane? Were you afraid?

MRS. FRANCIS: We were scared. I was real scared. We were all hanging on to each other when we were in there?

MR. KAYE: Do you remember climbing into the plane? What were your thoughts?

MRS. FRANCIS: Oh yeah! I wonder, will we make it down again?! We were dressed up though. My mother made a lot of nice clothes for us.

MR. KAYE: Was it cold on the plane?

MRS. FRANCIS: No. It was not cold. I don't think so. We all had new clothes on. We dressed warm. My sister Tracey won't look out. We tell her, "I look out". Half way, and it's good to look you know. And I tell her to look out. She just scream and hold us.

MR. KAYE: You told me before that by the late 1930s, all the families were leaving Old Rampart.

MRS. FRANCIS: Oh yeah.

MR. KAYE: And they were moving to Fort Yukon?

MRS. FRANCIS: Uh-huh. And his family, the Thomas, all went to Old Crow.

MR. KAYE: And some went to Old Crow. And why was it that people were leaving the river and that way of life? It was for school for their kids?

MRS. FRANCIS: Um-hum. Mostly for school.

MR. KAYE: Did people want the easier life in village as well?

MRS. FRANCIS: I don't think so. I don't think that anybody complain about hard life outside. I stay in Old Village, eleven years. In the morning, I got to get pretty darn busy when I got kids. Simon would be out on the trap line. Sometime I don't know what to do with kids. Josie was only four. I put her in the window so I could see her from outdoors, and give her something to do there. And I have another one in a crib. And I had to saw wood for us. I had to saw wood for mother-in-law too. Split wood. And I waited and waited some times, so they could sleep. And when they are sleeping I do everything. Even then, I didn't think it was a hard time. All night I wash diapers, then, tomorrow, I hang it outdoors. I thought that was fun.

MR. KAYE: Do you use moss for diapers, or lining diapers?

MRS. FRANCIS: No. I tried that but I guess I'm not very good at it, so it just get all over the floor.

MR. KAYE: So you used cloth?

MRS. FRANCIS: Yeah. My mother-in-law doesn't want me to wash that much, but geez, it'd get all over!

MR. KAYE: You tell me that you didn't think it was too bad of a life, or hard of a life, but you staid out there for a long time. But the people who left early, were they interested in an easier life? Was BIA helping people out, in the towns?

MRS. FRANCIS: To the BIA is what spoil all the people. To me it didn't help.

MR. KAYE: How's that?

MRS. FRANCIS: Because when we moved to Gulgeezik, in 1967, ...
Knock at Bella's door, tapes stops

MR. KAYE: Bella, when so many other families where moving to Fort Yukon in the late 1930s and early 1940s why did Charlie Strong want to stay, living out on the river? And why did you any Simon stay living out on the river?

MRS. FRANCIS: Well, we were raised, and lived all our lives out there. We really like it. Even now in 1993 we still want to go back to Porcupine River. If it's my way, and I am healthy, I move right back up to Old Village. Start it all up. And tell the kids what to do. But the way things are going, and the way kids are going, they have got into all these habits. And it's even dangerous for the kids to stay out now, unless somebody go with them. If you take a bunch of kids out in the woods, you know darn well they're gonna get into a problem.

MR. KAYE: Do you wish your grandchildren could have the same life opportunity that you had? Do you wish your grandchildren could live out on the river like you did?

MRS. FRANCIS: Oh yeah! I'll say, yeah! They know nothing now. And then they would know a lot of things!

